

**NATIONAL ENVIRONMENTAL POLICY ACT (NEPA)
COMPLIANCE RECORD FOR CATEGORICAL EXCLUSIONS (CX)
U.S. Department of Interior
Bureau of Land Management**

PART I. – PROPOSED ACTION

BLM Office: TFO
2014-0028-CX

NEPA No.: DOI-BLM-AZ-G020-

Case File No.:

Proposed Action Title/Type: Mineral Mountain Bighorn Sheep Augmentation

Applicant: Az Game and Fish Dept

Location of Proposed Action: At the mouth of Box Canyon, Mineral Mountains 33.129048, -111.207275

Description of Proposed Action: To provide a release point for bighorn sheep captured for release in other areas that cannot be released at the original intended release area and can not be held in transport boxes. The duration of the proposal is for ten (10) years. The animals will be fitted with radio and GPS collars to track their movements. Collar recovery may entail the use of a helicopter to get people to the vicinity of the collar but will not be used within the White Canyon wilderness area. The release point is a well used campsite at the mouth of Box Canyon and will not involve any ground disturbing activities. Access across Az. State Trust lands has been granted for these activities for a period of ten years.

Part II. – PLAN CONFORMANCE REVIEW

This proposed action is subject to the following land use plan(s): Phoenix RMP

Decisions and page nos.: Wildlife and wildlife habitat on public land in Arizona are managed under a memorandum of understanding with the Arizona Game and Fish Department. page 15.

Date plan approved/amended: Dec, 1988

This proposed action has been reviewed for conformance with these plans (*43 CFR 1610.5-3, BLM Manual 1601.04.C.2*).

PART III. – NEPA COMPLIANCE DETERMINATION REVIEW

A. The proposed action is categorically excluded from further documentation under the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) in accordance with Select from dropdown:

A. Fish and Wildlife

5. Routine augmentations, such as fish stocking, providing no new species are introduced. ;

And

B. Extraordinary Circumstances Review: In accordance with **43 CFR 46.215**, any action that is normally categorically excluded must be subjected to sufficient environmental review to determine if it meets any of the 12 Extraordinary Circumstances described. If any circumstance applies to the action or project, and existing NEPA documentation does not adequately address it, then further NEPA analysis is required.

IMPORTANT: Appropriate staff should review the circumstances listed in Part IV, comment and initial for concurrence. Rationale supporting the concurrence should be included in the appropriate block.

Part IV. – EXTRAORDINARY CIRCUMSTANCES DOCUMENTATION

PREPARERS:

DATE:

| | |
|----------------|-----------|
| Darrell Tersey | 9/29/2014 |
| Amy Sobiech | 9/29/2014 |
| | |
| | |
| | |
| | |
| | |
| | |
| | |
| | |
| | |
| | |
| | |

/s/ Amy Markstein
PLANNING & ENVIRONMENTAL SPECIALIST

10/1/2014
DATE

The action has been reviewed to determine if any of the extraordinary circumstances (43 CFR 46.215(a)-(l)) apply. The project would:

(a) Have significant impacts on public health or safety.

| | | |
|------------|-----------------------|--|
| Yes | No X | <p>Rationale: The project is in a remote area involving the release of animals that are endemic to the area into their natural habitat and has no impact on public health or safety as the sheep utilize the rough, rugged and remote landscape and avoid human activities.</p> <p style="text-align: right;">Preparer's Initials <u>DT</u></p> |
|------------|-----------------------|--|

(b) Have significant impacts on such natural resources and unique geographic characteristics as historic or cultural resources; park, recreation or refuge lands; wilderness areas; wild or scenic rivers; national natural landmarks; sole or principal drinking water aquifers; prime farmlands; wetlands (Executive Order 11990); floodplains (Executive Order 11988); national monuments; migratory birds; and other ecologically significant or critical areas.

| | | |
|------------|-----------------------|---|
| Yes | No X | <p>Rationale: The release of endemic animals into their native habitat will not have any significant impacts on natural resources and unique geographic characteristics as historic or cultural resources; park, recreation or refuge lands; wilderness areas; wild or scenic rivers; national natural landmarks; sole or principal drinking water aquifers; prime farmlands; wetlands; floodplains; national monument; migratory birds; and other ecologically significant or critical areas.</p> <p style="text-align: right;">Preparer's Initials <u>DT</u></p> |
|------------|-----------------------|---|

(c) Have highly controversial environmental effects or involve unresolved conflicts concerning alternative uses of available resources [NEPA section 102 (2) (E)].

| | | |
|------------|-----------------------|--|
| Yes | No X | <p>Rationale: Translocation of desert bighorn sheep in Arizona has been an ongoing process for the last forty plus years and has not been shown to have any highly controversial environmental or unresolved conflicts concerning alternative uses of available resources in remote areas such as this.</p> <p style="text-align: right;">Preparer's Initials <u>DT</u></p> |
|------------|-----------------------|--|

| | | |
|---|--------------------|---|
| (d) Have highly uncertain and potentially significant environmental effects or involve unique or unknown environmental risks. | | |
| Yes | No X | Rationale: Translocation of desert bighorn sheep in Arizona has been an ongoing process for the last forty plus years and has not been shown to have any highly uncertain and potentially significant environmental effects or involve unknown or unique environmental risks. <div style="text-align: right;">Preparer's Initials <u>DT</u></div> |
| (e) Establish a precedent for future action or represent a decision in principal about future actions with potentially significant environmental effects. | | |
| Yes | No X | Rationale: Translocation of desert bighorn sheep in Arizona has been an ongoing process for the last forty plus years and has not been shown to have any significant environmental effects. <div style="text-align: right;">Preparer's Initials <u>DT</u></div> |
| (f) Have a direct relationship to other actions with individually insignificant but cumulatively significant environmental effects. | | |
| Yes | No X | Rationale: This project does have a direct relationship to other actions which are analyzed in other NEPA documents, and they have not been shown to have any significant environmental effects. <div style="text-align: right;">Preparer's Initials <u>DT</u></div> |
| (g) Have significant impacts on properties listed, or eligible for listing, on the National Register of Historic Places as determined by the bureau. | | |
| Yes | No X | Rationale: The BLM archaeologist conducted a review of the project and found that there are no properties listed or eligible for listing on the National Register of Historic Places involved in this project. <div style="text-align: right;">Preparer's Initials <u>AS</u></div> |

| | | |
|---|----------------|---|
| (h) Have significant impacts on species listed, or proposed to be listed, on the List of Endangered or Threatened Species, or have significant impacts on designated Critical Habitat for these species. | | |
| Yes | No X | Rationale: A T&E effects determination was conducted on 9-19-2014 for this project and no significant impacts were found on T&E species and Critical habitat. Preparer's Initials <u>DT</u> |
| (i) Violate a Federal law, or a State, local or tribal law or requirement imposed for the protection of the environment. | | |
| Yes | No X | Rationale: This project will not violate any Federal, State, local, or tribal laws or requirement imposed for the protection of the environment. Preparer's Initials <u>DT</u> |
| (j) Have a disproportionately high and adverse effect on low income or minority populations (Executive Order 12898). | | |
| Yes | No X | Rationale: There are no human populations near the project site. Preparer's Initials <u>DT</u> |
| (k) Limit access to and ceremonial use of Indian sacred sites on Federal lands by Indian religious practitioners or significantly adversely affect the physical integrity of such sacred sites (Executive Order 13007). | | |
| Yes | No X | Rationale: The events of this project are of extremely short duration and the project area has not been identified as an access point to or a sacred site for Indian religious practitioners. Preparer's Initials <u>AS</u> |

(l) Contribute to the introduction, continued existence, or spread of noxious weeds or non-native invasive species known to occur in the area or actions that may promote the introduction, growth, or expansion of the range of such species (Federal Noxious Weed Control Act and Executive Order 13112).

| | | |
|------------|-----------------------|---|
| Yes | No X | Rationale: This project is of short duration and low intensity and will not contribute to the introduction, continued existence, or spread of noxious weeds or non-native invasive species. <div style="text-align: right;">Preparer's Initials <u>DT</u></div> |
|------------|-----------------------|---|

PART V. –COMPLIANCE REVIEW CONCLUSION

I have reviewed this plan conformance and NEPA compliance record, and have determined that the proposed project is in conformance with the approved land use plan and that no further environmental analysis is required.

MITIGATION MEASURES/OTHER REMARKS:

/s/ Viola Hillman
Tucson Field Manager

10/01/2014

APPROVING OFFICIAL: _____ DATE: _____

TITLE: _____

Note: The signed conclusion on this compliance record is part of an interim step in the BLM's internal decision process and does not constitute an appealable decision. A separate decision to implement the action should be prepared in accordance with program specific guidance.